Company	Year	West Bengal	Bihar/Jharkhand
	1998-1999	30	16
BCL	1999-2000	31	15
	2000-2001	32	15
	1998-1999	1	29
BCCL	1999-2000	1	27
	2000-2001	1	38
	1998-1999	—	—
ECL	1999-2000	—	14
	2000-2001	—	10

(c) Illegally mined coal and implements are seized. The persons apprehended are handed over to the local police by the coal companies and FIRs are lodged. Further, preventive and punitive action would lie within the purview of the State authorities.

Reforms in mining sector

3044. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of COAL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal under active consideration of the Union Government to introduce reforms in mining sector/coal mining sector to effect a major change during the Tenth Plan period;

(b) if so, the details thereof in all respects;

(c) when the reforms are expected to be initiated; and

(d) how far it shall improve the mining conditions/coal production and reduction in prices thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINES (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (c) The major reforms initiatives are as follows:

1. The Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill, 2000 has been introduced in the Rajya Sabha with the following objectives:

(i) To allow the Indian Companies to mine coal and lignite in the country

without the existing restriction of captive mining. In other words, the objective is to allow the Indian companies in public and private sector to mine coal and lignite and also to sell the same in the open market.

(ii) To allow the Indian Companies in the public and private sector to be engaged in exploration of coal and lignite resources in the country.

The purpose is to augment production of coal in the country through association of the private sector with the existing nationalised coal sector to bridge the demand and supply gap assessed for the Xth and XIth plan period.

2. Recently the Government have revised the coal mining policy of 1979 spelling out the conditions under which the State Government undertakings can do coal mining. Under the revised policy, the State Government companies or undertakings are allowed to do mining of coking and non-cocking coal or lignite reserves, either by opencast or underground method, anywhere in the country.

3. The Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 which govern the mining sector including coal and lignite, was last amended in December 1999 and subsequently two principal Rules, *viz*, Mineral Concession Rules, 1960 and Mineral Conservation & Development Rule, 1988 have been amended thrice in a bid to simplify the procedure for grant of mineral concession, to attract more and more foreign direct investment in mining sector and to delegate more and more powers to the State Governments, who are the owners of the minerals. Therefore, reforms in mining and coal sector is an ongoing process. Total number of Foreign Investment Promotion Board's (FIPB) approval in the mining sector is 70; the foreign equity component of the approval is approximately Rs. 4,000 crores.

4. Two Working Groups-one on Mineral Exploration and the other on Coal and Lignite-were constituted by the Planning Commission to make recommendations for the Tenth Five Year Plan. The two Working Groups have submitted their reports to the Planning Commission.

(d) Reforms should attract higher investment, better technology and more skilled manpower should foster competition and better management practices; should keep the domestic mining sector to face international competition; and above all; should promote delivery of better products and services at more competitive prices to the consumers.